

REMARKS

Claims 17 - 29 are pending in the application.

Appropriate headings have been added to the specification, and claims from the literal translation have been replaced by claims drafted in conformity with U.S. Patent practice.

The application in its amended state is believed to be in condition for allowance. However, should the Examiner have any comments or suggestions, or wish to discuss the merits of the application, the undersigned would very much welcome a telephone call in order to expedite placement of the application into condition for allowance.

Respectfully submitted,



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17. An apparatus for treating substrates, comprising:

at least one essentially closed process container, which is disposed is a gas atmosphere, contains a treatment fluid and has at least two continuously open openings for a linear guidance of substrates through said at least one process container;

an essentially closed overflow container that is mounted on said at least one process container and has an overflow means disposed above said openings of said at least one process container;

an inlet means for treatment fluid, wherein said inlet means is disposed below said openings of said at least one process container; and

a device for generating an underpressure in said at least one process container.

18. An apparatus according to claim 17, wherein a height of said overflow means is adjustable.

19. An apparatus according to claim 17, wherein an essentially horizontally disposed diffuser plate is provided in said at least one process container.

20. An apparatus according to claim 17, wherein a collecting trough is mounted on an outer periphery of said at least one process container below at least one of said openings thereof.

21. An apparatus according to claim 20, wherein a drip catcher is disposed in said collecting trough.

22. An apparatus according to claim 17, wherein at least one ultrasonic unit is provided within said at least one process container.

23. An apparatus according to claim 22, wherein said at least one ultrasonic unit extends over the entire width of said at least one process container.

24. An apparatus according to claim 22, wherein said at least one ultrasonic unit is beveled on a rear side thereof in order to provide an aerodynamic shape.

25. An apparatus according to claim 22, wherein at least two ultrasonic units are provided that face one another, and wherein at least one respective ultrasonic unit is disposed above and below a level of said openings respectively so that a substrate is movable between said ultrasonic units.

26. An apparatus according to claim 17, wherein a drying chamber is provided that surrounds an outlet opening of said at least one process container, and wherein said drying chamber is provided with a device for introducing a fluid that reduces a surface tension of said treatment fluid.

27. An apparatus according to claim 17, wherein a plurality of process containers are disposed one after another.

28. An apparatus according to claim 27, wherein means are provided for introducing different treatment fluids into said process containers.

29. An apparatus according to claim 27, wherein a respective wetting unit is disposed between each two process containers.